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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Maryland State Department of Education Awarded 2021 Farm to School Grant**

***Over \$96,000 Awarded to Support Office of School and Community Nutrition  
Programs, Maryland Department of Agriculture's Education Project***

**BALTIMORE, MD (September 15, 2021)** - To support healthy nutrition options for Maryland students, the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs (OSCNP) and the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) have been awarded \$96,766 through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm to School grant program.

In partnership with MDA and Maryland Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), MSDE will use the Farm to School grant to increase access and procurement of locally sourced foods in schools across the state. The grant will prioritize schools located in Opportunity Zones with 40% or more of students eligible to receive free and reduced meals. The awarded project, *A Roadmap to Farm to School Sustainability*, will engage Farm to School stakeholders in a collaborative approach for resource preservation planning, and will provide agricultural education in schools.

MSDE and MDA will continue to promote and administer the Farm to School program in Maryland. The program brings locally produced foods into school cafeterias; hands-on learning activities such as farm visits, school visits by producers, school gardening, and culinary classes; and the integration of food-related education into the standards-based classroom curriculum. The partnership with Maryland SNAP-Ed will involve collaborating with experts on the Healthy Food Systems Strategic Initiative Team at the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

According to the 2019 USDA Farm to School Census, Maryland schools spent over \$19 million on local foods in School Year 2018-2019. Over 95% of Maryland schools serve local foods and nearly 97% of Maryland schools participate in Farm to School activities such as nutrition education, taste testing, gardening and collaborating with local farmers.

For more information on Maryland's Farm to School Grant, please contact Samantha Bader at the MSDE's Office of School and Community Nutrition Programs at 410-767-0513 or [samantha.bader@maryland.gov](mailto:samantha.bader@maryland.gov).

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